

The Director of Central Intelligence

Washington, D. C. 20505

MEMORANDUM FOR: Senior Interdepartmental Group - Intelligence
National Foreign Intelligence Board Members
National Foreign Intelligence Council Members
SUBJECT: Unauthorized Disclosures of Classified Intelligence
Information

1. We must do everything we can to check the increasing hemorrhage of classified information concerning vital intelligence programs through unauthorized disclosures to and in the press. Regardless of their motives, those who make such disclosures damage vital intelligence programs. They betray the trust placed in them and we must intensify our efforts to identify them to take away their access to the nation's secrets. Each of us must take prompt, vigorous legal or administrative action on this.

2. Each person in our organizations must understand that we need and must establish fundamental change in attitudes toward "leaks." Classified intelligence must be protected. This means it is to be discussed only with persons with proper clearance and an official need to know. Government employees who are not officially designated spokespersons, but who provide information to the media concerning intelligence programs must be dealt with severely. The appearance of classified information in the press is not a license to confirm, deny, embellish, speculate or comment in any way on that information. Doing so simply aggravates the damage already done. Quotation of an "official source" in the media does not constitute declassification. Such anonymous attribution stimulates unauthorized disclosures and should be avoided.

3. The cost of unauthorized disclosures is unbearable, in terms of diminished security and the taxpayer's burden. If this deluge of classified intelligence revelations is not stopped, I will have to seek ways to restrict dissemination and limit source and method content of intelligence reports in order to cut the losses to our collection capabilities.

4. As the officials who bear the responsibility for protecting the United States, we must act firmly and vigorously to cut off these disclosures which degrade our ability to know the capabilities and intentions of our most powerful and implacable adversary and of terrorists who threaten the lives of U.S. citizens. I know I can count on your fullest cooperation.

William J. Casey